



WINNER OF FOUR NATIVE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION AWARDS INCLUDING GENERAL EXCELLENCE IN 2011

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## Inside The Drum

Update	2
Culture	3
Health	4
Education	5
Sports	6
Basketball	8
Cabin Fever	9
Voices	13
Notices	14
Classifieds	15
Back Page	16



# Fort Lewis group honors Southern Ute elders

By Suzi Richards  
The Southern Ute Drum

All People's Lodge, a Fort Lewis College student organization, hosted its first annual Elders Day on Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the school's Native American Center.

The event was put together to honor local tribal and community elders, said Clarence Smith, a student organizer. Eight elders were honored, including five Southern Utes: Annabelle Eagle, Sage Remington, Alice Groves Neash, former Southern Ute Indian Tribal Vice Chairman and Council Lady Vida B. Peabody, and former Chairman, Council Lady and Chief Judge Pearl E. Casias.

"This day was held to build a community, [to] share and sit with our elders who are a great wealth of knowledge and wisdom and are here for a good reason," Smith said.

Many students from Fort Lewis stopped by to visit the elders and share in their knowledge, which in turn came from their parents and grandparents.

Students and elders talked and shared memories over a lunch buffet, discussing the good and bad of the old days when they were younger. Many activities



photo Suzi Richards/SU Drum

Numerous elders, from varied backgrounds, showed support at the first annual Elder's Day held at Fort Lewis College on Tuesday, Feb 21. Most of them were told to write a "I am from..." poem which includes details of their lives; how they grew up, where they are from, touching on their favorite hobbies and pastimes. Seen here Southern Ute elder Vida Peabody shares her "I am from..." poem in front of the class as spectators and friends listen, including former Chairman Pearl Casias. The event was held at the new Native American Center on campus.

Elders page 11



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio's Alex Pena grits his teeth and fends off a low shot attempt by Holly's Robert Darnell during the Class 2A 126-pound title match on Saturday, Feb. 18 inside Pepsi Center.

## Pena undone in a historic outro

Wildcat denies Bobcat 4th title

By Joel Priest  
Special to the Drum

Ignacio senior Alex Pena, a Southern Ute tribal member, saw his illustrious wrestling career draw to a close on Saturday, Feb. 25 with a rare loss, a somber end to a triumphant span in which he amassed three state titles and came within moments of a fourth.

Holly's Robert Darnell denied spectators a view of wrestling history by halting Pena's run during the Class 2A 126-pound crowning match and winning his second Colorado State Wrestling Championships title while denying Pena his fourth. All but the outcome of the match echoed a similar showdown in their freshman year, when the two faced off in the duel that won Pena his first title.

And in that there was no shame or defeat; climbing that podium even once can be enough for a prep wrestler. The Wildcat had to initially wait until his junior year,

after Pena had gained CHSAA Title No. 3.

"I knew there was pressure," Pena said of the expected senior-v-senior, champ-v-champ duel with Darnell, "but everything behind me didn't really matter until this point, you know?"

With a 55-second pin of Byers senior Edwards Galarza two nights before, it appeared Pena was primed to become the 17th wrestler in state annals to complete a four-peat, and even more so after the following afternoon's 10-3 decision over Paonia senior Cody Clawson.

Despite contesting just 14 previous varsity matches in 2011-12, Swink senior Andrew Valdez pushed Pena to the limit in the semifinals.

Darnell, meanwhile, had followed Pena's semi with a more convincing pin in 88 seconds of Hayden junior T-Lane Mazzola to bring about the expected clash of the classification's No. 1 and 2 for

all the marbles. And in this case, the No. 1 also happened to be listed among the nation's elite seniors (albeit at 120 pounds) in the February issue of Wrestling USA.

Darnell pushed it to 6-3 through two minutes, while making sure he was the one in the lead. Not allowing Pena much weakness to work with, he managed to ride out an 8-5 decision after the full six.

"Don't know," Pena said quietly, yet composed, after taking a runner-up medal in a surreal awards presentation. "It was just another match, I guess. Tried not to be too nervous about it."

Darnell finished his final campaign standing 28-1, while Pena went out 33-3 — and a stellar 133-8 in likely the most decorated four seasons Ignacio wrestling has ever known. Known for a signature thumb/pinky hand gesture flashed after victory upon victory, the "hang

Pena page 7

## 'Cabin Fever' awakens Ignacio



The Four Corners Gourd Society hosted the Cabin Fever Gourd Dance and Powwow at the Southern Ute Multi-Purpose Facility in Ignacio on Saturday, Feb. 18. The one-day event brought the community together, although small in numbers the festivities were geared towards getting people out of the house to join in song and dance.

Gourd dancers (above) honored on of its youngest members with an honor song. Southern Ute Royalty, Miss Southern Ute First Alternate Krista Richards, Little Miss Southern Ute Eufemia Pardo and her brothers, Braves Arnulfo and Amarante (left), led the grand entry behind Dr. Jim Jefferson to begin the powwow segment of the evenings event. Two-step, round dancing and cake walks were part of the social event.



photos Robert Ortiz/SU DRUM